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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Daughters of the American Revolution

AT THEIR

CONGRESS HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C.,
APRIL, 1905,

BY

MRS. A. A. BLOW, OF VIRGINIA,

Chairman John Smith Monument Committee of the Association
for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

It is with great pleasure that I avail myself of the privilege of coming before you to propose to the Daughters of the American Revolution a patriotic duty, which I am sure will arouse your enthusiasm, and to ask the powerful influence of our Society in recognizing and honoring the name and deeds of the first great man in American history, a work which we, as a patriotic order of American women, owe to our country, to posterity, and to the history of the civilized world.

The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, a society of which many of you are members, has requested me to organize an undertaking, which, with your assistance, will fittingly commemorate the earliest events of our history and to accord but tardy recognition and honor to the one great man to whom we are most indebted for our

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national existence, to Capt. John Smith, the President of Virginia, and the first Admiral of New England, the real founder and preserver of the Anglo-Saxon in America. This Association has highly honored me with the appointment of Chairman of the John Smith Memorial Committee, a position which I consider a special compliment, and have accepted with pleasure, as the memory and achievements of John Smith in the early settlements of this, our country, are as dear to us of New England ancestry as to our sisters of the Sunny South.

HEROIC AND CHIVALROUS FIGURE.

The American nation, for which we Daughters feel such love and pride, which sentiments we wish to transmit with fervor to our children and to our children's children, has in the past three centuries attained a place in the world's history which is unprecedented. From this point we, as a united people, may pause in our prosperity and commemorate with pride and justice the honored names which have contributed in making this great country. To do this is a proud heritage, which this progressive and patriotic order claims as a duty. But in recording and preserving the anniversaries of our memorable events and in setting up mile-stones of our history and honoring in song and story the patriots, statesmen, pioneers, and soldiers who have made it, we have strangely neglected the foundation stone of our existence as an Anglo-Saxon people, and forgotten and ignored the one heroic, intrepid and chivalrous figure who shaped and planted it, Capt. John Smith.

The story of the Mayflower and the record of the deeds of our Pilgrim fathers in the settlement of Massachusetts are well known to every person, but there are few in this audience who can tell with the same facility the names of the three small vessels, the Susan Constant, the Goodspeed, and the Discovery, which found a haven and dropped anchor in the Chesapeake Bay on the 24th of this month, 1607, thirteen years before the Pilgrim fathers landed on Plymouth Rock and

stamped their noble characteristics upon this nation, which momentous event has already been alluded to by our sister from the Palmetto State on Monday in her greetings from the South.

The colony which these argonauts settled on Jamestown Island was thus the first spark of successful English settlement on this continent, and to one man above all others, Capt. John Smith, can be attributed the Anglo-Saxon settlement of America. To his skill, perseverance, fortitude and indomitable courage the preservation of the colony can alone be attributed. To him we owe our Anglo-Saxon lineage, laws, liberty, and language, for had the Jamestown colony failed, as did its predecessors on Roanoke Island, America would have been absorbed by the adventurers of Spain, who were forcing their settlements northward from Mexico and Florida, and the expedition of the Pilgrim fathers and their latter settlements in Massachusetts might never have been heard of.

BEFORE THE PLYMOUTH SETTLEMENT.

I know my New England, shall I say fellow-daughters, will rather question this, unless they remember that New England was discovered, surveyed, mapped, and named by John Smith seven years before the settlement of Plymouth, and that he also gave the name to New England and Boston, and to many other localities, which are still retained. But far more important still is the fact that through the maps, charts and descriptions of Capt. John Smith, our Pilgrim fathers were first induced to make their home in the New World. John Smith is, therefore, the first discoverer, explorer, geographer, and historian of New England, as he was of Virginia, which, as he himself terms, were the "Virgin Sisters of the New World."

It is not my purpose to discuss the remarkable characteristics and noble achievements and exceptional brilliancy of this great man. Fortunately, his own works and those of other chroniclers show conclusively what he accomplished, and the meagre reward he has received at the hands of this prosperous

nation. Suffice it to say regarding him, that should you read his own histories you will be filled with the same grateful enthusiasm which I endeavor to give you regarding his character.

You will see that he was a man, young, brave, and experienced as a soldier and pioneer. At the age of twenty-nine he had already served in the wars in Europe, been knighted for his achievements in Hungary and in Transylvania and had been appointed by the London Company as one of the first directors of the Virginia Colony, which at that time, by royal charter, embraced the entire coast of the United States from Nova Scotia to South Carolina. You would see that John Smith, President of Virginia, and Admiral of New England, to give him his official titles, was one of the most remarkable characters in our entire history, as a soldier, statesman and author, geographer, poet, and a clear-headed, practical English gentleman of highest moral character, and the one to whom we are more indebted than any man who ever crossed the Atlantic Ocean, excepting possibly Christopher Columbus.

SHOWN BY HIS MEMOIRS.

To show his love and loyalty to his country, he states himself in his memoirs, written in 1624: "This Virgin Sister, New England, at my humble suit, by our most gracious Prince Charles, hath been chargeable to me, for which I ne'er got one shilling, but it cost me many a pound; yet I think myself happy to see their prosperities, for in neither of these two countries (Virginia and New England) have I one foot of land, nor the very house I builded, nor the ground I digged with mine own hands, nor even any content or satisfaction at all."

Nearly three hundred years have passed and this condition still continues, for to this great character, standing alone in the very dawn of our existence, there is not a monument commemorating him in stone or metal, either in the country of his birth or the country which he wrested from the Spaniards and the savage, and I ask you, ladies, shall this neglect continue?

I earnestly desire to secure the co-operation of every patriotic society in America, as well as every individual American man or woman who is blessed with the pride of their country, to help us place in memory of Capt. John Smith a heroic monument in a fitting place and in a manner worthy of our appreciation of him and his achievements.

We have not yet decided the exact locality for the monument, but three have been suggested; one on Jamestown Island, one on the spot the expedition first landed at Cape Henry at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, on April 24, 1607, and the third on an island made by the United States government, facing the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, between Cape Charles and Cape Henry. The consent of the government would have to be gained for the latter place, but many members of Congress have offered their help in this matter, which could probably be arranged without difficulty.

I am sure you will all agree with me even now, if not, certainly when you have carefully considered our duty in this matter, that it will be the privilege, as well as the pleasure of each member of every patriotic society in our country, especially those of the Daughters of the American Revolution, to aid us in every way in her power in carrying this plan to a successful issue.

HIS TRIBUTE TO WOMANKIND.

It is moreover, especially appropriate and befitting that the women of America should take the initiative steps and, if possible, the entire charge of this patriotic movement. You will probably ask, Why is this the case? I will answer you in as few words as possible. It appears in the memoirs of John Smith, in his dedication of his book to the Duchess of Richmond and Gordon, descriptive of Virginia and New England, that he gracefully attributes all of his successes and comforts in life to the ladies in the following quaint and beautiful language:

"Yet my comfort is, that heretofore honorable and vertuous Ladies, and comparable but amongst themselues, haue offered me rescue and protection in my greatest dangers; even in forraigne parts. The beauteous Lady Tragabizanda, when I was a slaye to the Turkas, did all she could to secure me. When I overcame the Bashaw of Kalbris in Tartaria, the Charitable Lady Callamata supplyed my necessities. In the vtmost of many extremities, that blessed Pokahontas, the great King's daughter of Virginia, oft saved my life. When I escape[i] the crueltie of Pirats and most furious stormes, a long time alone in a small boat at sea, and driven ashore in France, the good Lady Madam Chanoyes, bountifully assisted me."

What is then more fitting than that the women of the present day should continue to do honor to a man of this character and chivalrous nature, by thus perpetuating his memory? Therefore, I wish to ask of the Daughters of the American Revolution their hearty co-operation and assistance in this national commemoration, which I earnestly hope will meet the unanimous approval of this Congress now assembled. I am assured this movement will in no way conflict with any previous undertaking of the Daughters of the American Revolution. I have also great pleasure in announcing to you that our efforts have met with the indorsement of our distinguished President-General, Mrs. Charles Warren Fairbanks, who has consented to become the honorary chairman of the John Smith Monument Committee, and I beg that this Congress take such action as they deem proper to secure the assistance of every Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution from Maine to Texas, and from Virginia to California, with the object of commemorating the birth of our nation by erecting a monument to Capt. John Smith, bearing the following beautiful and Christianlike sentiment written by himself, and which could only emanate from a man whom this glorious nation should delight to honor:

"Then seeing we are not borne for our selues, but each to

helpe other, and our abilities are much alike at the houre of our birth, and the minute of our death: seeing our good deeds, or our badde, by faith in Christ's merits, is all we haue to carrie our soules to hauen, or hell: Seeing honour is our liues ambition and our ambition after death, to haue an honorable memorie of our life: and seeing by noe meanes wee would bee abated of the dignities and glories of our Predecessors; let vs imitate their vertues to bee worthily their successors."

In order to organize an active movement for the erection of a lasting monument to Captain John Smith, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities created a committee, of which Mrs. A. A. Blow, of Gloucester county, Virginia, was made chairman, with authority to add to her organization, and to solicit such contributions and assistance as the Committee might deem expedient.

In furtherance of the object, Mrs. Blow made the above address. She has also obtained the consent of the Secretary of War, subject to such approval as by law may be necessary, to erect on the site of Fort Calhoun (the Rip Raps), in front of Fort Monroe, a statue or beacon-light statue to John Smith, if the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities shall deem that a proper place.

Mrs. Blow's address before the Daughters of the American Revolution was most cordially received by that body, and its purpose was unanimously approved. The address was seconded by several prominent members of the D. A. R. Congress, and the address itself ordered to be printed in the minutes of their proceedings.

The John Smith Committee propose to ask every Chapter of the D. A. R., also every Chapter of every patriotic order in America to contribute to the construction of the *pedestal* of the John Smith monument, a dimension-stone suitably inscribed with the names of the donors.

As soon as the plans of the pedestal are complete, the dimensions of such stones will be sent out.

The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities earnestly requests your personal assistance and contribution in aid of this patriotic movement, which we desire to have completed by 1907.

Mrs. JOSEPH BRYAN,
President A. P. V. A.

Address all correspondence and contributions to

Mrs. A. A. BLOW,
"Belleville,"
Gloucester, Virginia.

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